Is There Anyone We Can Trust? December 30, 2018

*Psalm 23:1-6 Guest Speaker: David Daniels*

In a world of “fake news”, alternate facts and bitter partisanship, you may ask yourself: “Is there anyone we can trust?” If you are confused, discouraged or fearful, and wondering where to turn; whom to trust; what to build your life upon; then Psalm 23 provides the perfect prescription for your dilemma.

This psalm expresses confidence in God’s goodness – in this life and in the life to come. The personal way in which the psalmist speaks of God, the imagery of God’s soothing guidance, and the ensuing confidence in God have all been factors in making this one of the most charming and beloved of the Psalms. The universal appeal of this psalm lies in the comfort it gives to those who have confronted the most difficult periods of life … It is a psalm of God’s strength and grace for all ages.

Willem A. VanGemeren, “Psalms”, *Expositor’s Bible Commentary,* Vol. 5, Zondervan Publishing House, 1991, p.214.

We can trust God.

1. We can trust God because he is our shepherd. (vv.1-4)
2. He provides what we need. (v.3)

* Sustenance

*“He makes me lie down in green pastures.”*

*“He leads me beside still waters.”*

*“He restores my soul.”*

* Guidance

*“He leads me in paths of righteousness …”*

*“… for his name’s sake.”*

1. He protects us. (v.4)

*“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me … ”*

*“… your rod and your staff, they comfort me”*

1. The descriptions used by the psalmist speak of God’s continuing provision, presence, and protection in our lives.

* Why do you think Psalm 23 is so well-known and popular among Christians, and even among some non-Christians?
* List some specific ways that you believe God has provided what you need.
* What is so significant about the psalmist saying God leads us “for his name’s sake”?
* In what ways do you believe you have experienced God’s protection in your life?

1. We can trust God because he is a generous host. (vv.5-6)
2. He provides the richest of fares and vindicates us before our enemies. (v.5)

*“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies …”*

*“… you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.”*

1. He comforts us with his goodness and love throughout our lives.

*“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life …”*

1. To *“dwell in the house of the LORD forever”* is to consciously experience and enjoy God’s goodness and love extended to his children both now and forever.

* Describe how you have experienced God’s “*goodness and mercy”* in your life.

1. The Lord Jesus Christ is this shepherd.
   1. He is the good shepherd.

* “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. … I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.”

John 10:11, 14-16 (ESV)

* 1. He is the faithful, always-present shepherd.

*“… I will never leave you nor forsake you. So we can confidently say, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?”* (Hebrews 13:5b-6)

* 1. He is the promise-keeping shepherd.

*“For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.”* (2 Corinthians 1:20)

* Read John 10:11-18. What do these verses teach about Jesus as our shepherd?
* What is significant about Paul’s assertion that *“all the promises of God find their Yes in him (Jesus)”*?
* What truth from Psalm 23 did you find most significant – most encouraging or challenging?

Notes